

REMARKS ON THE ANGLO-SAXON CHARTERS GRANTED TO THE  
ABBEY OF ST. DENIS, IN FRANCE, AND ON THE SEALS  
ATTACHED TO THEM.

IN an article on the charter of Eudes, king of France, printed in the *Archaeological Journal* for September, 1854, I had occasion to notice the remarkable circumstance that, previous to the reign of Edward the Confessor, the Anglo-Saxon sovereigns should have been accustomed to authenticate their grants by a simple cross, and not rather have imitated the practice of sealing, which had prevailed among their neighbours, the Franks, from the time of Clovis. It was intimated at the same time, that a few well-authenticated instances to the contrary existed in the Anglo-Saxon charters granted to the Abbey of St. Denis, on which some remarks were promised on a future occasion. This promise I now proceed to redeem.

The existence of these charters in the archives of St. Denis ought to have been well known to the English antiquaries of the XVIIth century, since they were printed by Doublet in his "*Histoire de l'Abbaye de S. Denys*," in 1625; and, even at an earlier date (in 1606), a brief abstract of the charter of Offa, with a cast of the seal affixed to it, was communicated by the learned Peiresc to Sir Robert Cotton, as we learn from an entry made by the latter in MS. Harl. 66, fol. 91b, and also from a letter addressed by Peiresc himself to Camden, in 1618.<sup>1</sup> Little notice, however, was taken in England of these remarkable documents. In 1661 the charter of Duke Berhtwald to St. Denis was again printed by Dugdale in the "*Monasticon*," vol. ii. p. 964 (the copy of which he had obtained from Du Chesne),<sup>2</sup> but he omits the confirmatory charters of Offa and Æthelwulf. in order to save space (*brevitatis intuitu*), and makes no mention of the charter of Eadgar. At a more recent period, these charters

<sup>1</sup> *Gul. Camdeni et illustr. Vir. Epistolæ*, edited by Dr. Smith, 1691, p. 255.

<sup>2</sup> Dugdale obtained access to Du Chesne's Collections respecting the French monasteries, when in Paris, in 1648, as

we learn from his "*Life*," ed. Hamper, p. 23, 1827. His copy of Berhtwald's Charter was not made from the *original*, but from the ancient Cartulary of St. Denis.

are entirely ignored by Hickes and Madox, both of whom contend against the usage of seals before the reign of Edward the Confessor ; and although Felibien, in his History of the Abbey of St. Denis, in 1706, reprinted the charters of Offa and Eadgar, and their authenticity was more formally stated by the Benedictine authors of the "Nouveau Traité de Diplomatique," in 1759, yet it was not till more than half a century afterwards that the attention of English antiquaries was first formally directed to the evidence afforded by these charters, as to the use of seals previous to the Norman Conquest, in the papers written by Ellis and Douce, published in the "Archæologia," vol. xviii., 1817. Neither of these writers, however, had seen the original documents, and, consequently, they were unable to add anything to the statements already made by Doublet, Felibien, and the Benedictines. It was, therefore, with much satisfaction that I inspected in 1838—I believe for the first time, any person from this side of the channel had done so—two of these charters (namely, those of Offa and Eadgar), in the Hôtel Soubise, at Paris, where the *Archives du Royaume* are now preserved ; and I was so satisfied of their genuine character, that I caused accurate facsimiles to be made of them, together with drawings of the seals attached. It was my intention to have laid these before the Society of Antiquaries, but circumstances having occurred to prevent this, the copies remained forgotten in my hands, until I was reminded of them in the course of the inquiries made two years ago, to illustrate the charter and seal of Eudes.

These sealed grants to the Abbey of St. Denis, at a period much anterior to the reign of Edward the Confessor, seem to deserve more consideration than has hitherto been bestowed on them. Mr. Sharon Turner, the special historian of the Anglo-Saxons, can scarcely be said to have given more than a passing notice to their existence ; Lappenberg, in his more recent and able work, has touched but lightly on them ; while in the *Codex Diplomaticus Ævi Saxonici*, published in 1839—1848, they are altogether omitted.

These charters are (or rather, were) four in number, namely, of Berhtwald, Duke of the South Saxons, and of the kings Offa, Æthelwulf, and Eadgar. When Doublet published his work, all of them were preserved in the muniment room of St. Denis, but at present only those of Offa and

Eadgar remain, and it is uncertain at what period the others were lost.<sup>3</sup>

The charter of Berhtwald is, in all respects, note-worthy. He states in it, that having been afflicted with a serious illness, which the physicians could not cure, and having heard of the numerous miracles performed by the Holy Martyrs Denis, Rusticus, and Eleutherius, in the abbey presided over by Abbot Folcrad, he sought and obtained permission from the Emperor Charlemagne to cross over to France, and having laid down before the tomb of the Holy Martyrs, he was in a few days completely restored by their intercession. In gratitude for this service, he made a vow to the Lord and to those Saints, and having obtained a portion of their holy reliques, he built, after his return home, a church in their name<sup>4</sup> on his patrimonial estate at Rotherfield (*Ridrefelda*); and, with the concurrence of his brother Eadbald, and consent of his "fidelium," he bequeathed to the Holy Martyrs, in perpetuity, all his vill of Rotherfield, situate on the river Saford, in the county of Sussex,<sup>5</sup> with its appurtenances. He granted also, for the use of the monks of St. Denis, his ports of Hastings (*Hastingas*) and Pevensey (*Pevenisel*), lying on the sea, together with the salt-pans there. This charter is witnessed by Eadbald,<sup>6</sup> the Duke's brother, Egferdus Comes, Ediluinus Comes, and others. It is, moreover, stated to have been written and subscribed by "Æanfric Cancellarius;" and a memorandum is added, testifying that Deodatus, a monk of St. Denis, had received the aforesaid gifts from the hand of the donor, in the name of the Holy Martyrs, and certified the

<sup>3</sup> It is remarkable that Felibien does not reprint the grants of Berhtwald and Æthelwulf, and the Benedictines only refer to Eadgar's charter, as having been actually *seen* by them. The missing documents may therefore have been lost previously, but I should be more inclined to date their disappearance at the period of the French revolution, when the Cartularies of St. Denis were so lamentably destroyed.

<sup>4</sup> Thirteen monks of the Benedictine order were sent over from St. Denis to perform the duties of this monastic establishment, as we learn from Doublet, p. 187. Nothing more of its history is recorded, either by Dugdale or Tanner. The parish church is still consecrated to St. Denis.

<sup>5</sup> "Omne illam villam meam quæ vocatur Ridrefelda, sitam super fluvium qui dicitur Saforda, in pago qui nuncupatur Successa, et pagi civitas appellatur Chichestra, cum omnibus appendiciis suis." The name of the river is erroneously printed *Salforda* in Dugdale, which is repeated by Horsfield, *Hist. of Sussex*, vol. i. p. 377, edit. 1835. No such name appears on the county maps, and the name of *Rotherfield* is derived from the *Rother*, which here takes its rise.

<sup>6</sup> This Eadbald, as well as his brother Berhtwald, repeatedly occur as witnesses in the charters of Offa, from the year 770 to 796. Both are qualified by the titles of *dux* and *princeps*, which appear to be used indifferently.

delivery in the presence of all the brethren of the monastery.<sup>7</sup> In regard to the date of this charter, there is some little difficulty. From the mention in it of Folcrad (or Fulrad, as he is called by the French writers), the journey of Duke Berhtwald to Paris must have been undertaken previous to the year 784, in which year Fulrad is supposed to have died, and was succeeded by his disciple, Maginarius.<sup>8</sup> The charter itself was not executed till some years after, when the church had been built by Berhtwald at Rotherfield, and the date, as printed in Doublet (who professes to have copied from the original) is thus given, "Actum dominicæ incarnationis anno 795,<sup>9</sup> anno quo cœpit Offa regnare 31," but in the transcript furnished by Du Chesne to Dugdale, the grant is dated in 792, and the latter date is repeated by Sharon Turner and Lappenberg. Both these dates are erroneous, for the thirty-first year of Offa's reign (whether we reckon from the close of 757, when he succeeded to the throne, or from his coronation, as Lappenberg justly prefers, in 758) will alike fall in the year 788; and this is corroborated by the dates of the regnal years and indictions given in other charters of Offa,<sup>1</sup> and also by the confirmation charter of the same monarch specified hereafter. Berhtwald's grant is ratified in the following form, "✠ Ego Berhtwaldus Dux manu mea firmavi et subscripsi." No mention is made of any seal, but from the testimony of Doublet, who saw the original, we learn that there was one, bearing the effigy of the Duke. His words are, "*Cette charte scelle d'un scel de cire sain et entier, auquel est empreinte l'effigie, de relief, dudit Prince Berthauld, apres le naturel.*" This is, undoubtedly, the earliest instance yet discovered of a seal having been employed by the Anglo-Saxons, and it was probably affixed *en placard*,

<sup>7</sup> Printed in Doublet, p. 718, and in the *Monasticon*, vol. ii. p. 964, ed. 1661, vol. vi. p. 1077 new ed.

<sup>8</sup> See Felibien, p. 58. Fulrad became abbot in 750, and filled the post with great distinction for thirty-four years. His will, dated in 777, is printed, *ibid.*, in the *Pièces Justif.*, No. 56. His successor, Maginarius, died in 792, and was buried at the feet of Fulrad. Their epitaph was written by Alcuin. *Ibid.* p. 571.

<sup>9</sup> It would appear that Doublet must have misread or falsified the date in the original charter, as he certainly did that of Offa's confirmation, which he dates in

797, instead of 790. Dugdale, in another part of the *Monasticon*, vol. vi. p. 1053, new ed., erroneously places Berhtwald's grant "about the year 800," and this is followed by Tanner, in his *Notitia Monastica*.

<sup>1</sup> Thus, the year 779, is *indict. 2.* (*Cod. Dipl.* No. 136); 780, *indict. 3.*, *anno regni* 23, (No. 139); 781, *indict. 4.*, (No. 141); 784, *anno regni* 27, (No. 147); 789, *indict. 12.*, *annis regni* 31 et 32, (Nos. 154, 156); 793, *indict. 3.*, *anno regni* 36, (No. 162); 794, *anno regni* 37, (No. 164); 795 (dated by Kemble 790), *anno regni* 38, (No. 159).

in imitation of the Frank usage, in order to render the charter more valid in the estimation of the brethren of St. Denis. It is, therefore, deeply to be regretted, that so interesting a document should have been destroyed or lost.

About two years after Berhtwald's grant, namely, in 790, a confirmation of it was made, at the request of Maginarius, abbot of St. Denis, by the Mercian sovereign Offa, then at the height of his power, and who, from the friendly intercourse maintained by him with Charlemagne and Alcuin, was regarded on the continent with sentiments of great respect. He was then residing at the royal domain of Tamworth, in Staffordshire, and styles himself in his charter, "Rex Merciorum," and also, "Rex Anglorum."<sup>2</sup> By the same charter he confirms to the Holy Martyrs the donation of the two brothers Agonauuala and Sigrinus, of all their land in the port of Lundenuuic,<sup>3</sup> and adds to it, all the tax or custom payable to himself, whether in gold, silver, or rents. Amongst the witnesses appear the Queen Cynithryth (of legendary and unhappy memory), the king's son and successor, Ecgferth, and the dukes Berhtwald and Eadbald. This charter was ratified by the sign of the cross, and by an impression from the king's seal-ring; and was then delivered by Offa to the monk Nadelharius (sent over to England for this purpose by his abbot, Maginarius), in the presence of his brother Vitalis and Duke Eadbald; and the former conveyed it to France, and placed it on the tomb of the martyr St. Denis, in perpetual remembrance of the transaction.<sup>4</sup>

The third charter in the series is that of Æthelwulf, king

<sup>2</sup> The former title is the most usual in his charters and on his coins. His biographer, indeed, tells us, "Omnibus diebus vite sue se solum regem Merciorum in titulis scriptorum, in salutationibus, in relationibus, se precepit et constituit nominari," p. 976, edit. 1682, but exceptions to this are proved by the charter above specified, and also by other charters in the *Codex Dipl.* dated in 772, 774, 781, and 795, (Nos. 120, 123, 142, 159). In No. 142 he styles himself "Rex Merciorum" in the exordium of the charter, and "Rex Anglorum" in the attesting clauses, precisely as in the charter to St. Denis. Lappenberg, vol. i. p. 3, ed. Thorpe, only refers to *one* charter of Offa, in which this title is assumed, A.D. 795.

<sup>3</sup> Eadberht of Kent, in his charter to

the monastery of St Peter, Thanet, in 761, bestows "duarum navium transvectionis censum" at Sarr, "sicut a regibus Merciorum, Æthilbaldo videlicet et Offan longe ante concessum est tributum in loco cujus vocabulum est Lundenuuic." (*Cod. Dipl.*, No. 106, vol. i. p. 129); and in Æthelbald's charter, in 747, (No. 97, *ibid.*) he grants to St. Peter's, "totam exactionem navis eorum, mihi jure publico in *Lundoniensi* portu prius competentem," and this is confirmed by Offa, No. 112, *ibid.* According to Hasted, *Hist. of Kent*, vol. ii. p. 643, vol. iv. p. 247, ed. fol., *Lundenwic* was the ancient name of the port of *Sandwich*, from its being the entrance to the port of London.

<sup>4</sup> Printed in Doublet, p. 720, and Felibien, *P. J.* No. 62, p. xlii.

of Wessex, dated at London<sup>5</sup> (?), in November, 857, the nineteenth year of his reign, by which he recites, that having asked permission of the Roman pontiff Benedict,<sup>6</sup> to bestow some of his worldly possessions on holy places, the treasurer of the monastery of St. Denis, named Huniger, had been sent to him by the Pope, together with envoys of the Emperor Hludovicus [Louis II., son of Lothaire], bearing the papal license and blessing ; and who forthwith proceeded to lay his complaints before the king, in regard to the injuries done by his people to the property of the martyr St. Denis in various parts of Britain, particularly at Rotherfield, Hastings, and Pevensy, as also at Lundenwic. The king not only heard him favourably, and punished the offenders, but with the consent of his *fideles*, he decreed that all the possessions held by the Holy Martyrs in his dominions should be for ever free from exaction ; and to this he added as a gift, out of his treasury, twenty marks of gold, a silver vase of the same weight, and two purple palls, to adorn the tomb of the aforesaid martyrs. The charter is thus attested. “✠ Ego Ætheluulfus, Rex Anglorum, manu mea concessionis hujus præceptum firmavi, signo victoriosissimæ crucis Christi impresso.”<sup>7</sup> The seal is not mentioned, but Doublet again testifies its existence on the charter (no doubt, *en placard*), in the following words, “*Avec le sceau de cire sain et entier, auquel est empreinte l'effigie, de relief, dudit Seigneur Roy, après le naturel.*” This charter is now, as before stated, unfortunately lost.

The last of the series is the charter of Eadgar, dated at York, 26 December, in the second year of his reign, [960<sup>8</sup>], who, on the complaint made to him personally by Vitalis, Præpositus of the monastery of St. Denis, against Togred,<sup>9</sup> Provost of the king's household, for taking away three hundred sheep and fifty oxen from their vill of Rotherfield,<sup>1</sup> one

<sup>5</sup> “In *Lindonia* Civitate,” Doublet, which is probably an error of the copyist for *Lundonia*, as is also the date “*die undecimo nonas Novembris*,” for which we should, perhaps, read *quarto*.

<sup>6</sup> Benedict III. who held the papal see from 855 to 858.

<sup>7</sup> Printed in Doublet, p. 785.

<sup>8</sup> Dated wrongly 961 by Lappenberg, vol. i. p. 141.

<sup>9</sup> According to Lappenberg, this Togred is the same individual who is mentioned in the Saxon chronicle in 966 and 999, as

Earl Thored, son of Gunner ; but this seems to me very doubtful.

<sup>1</sup> It would seem by this, that the chief proprietorship of Rotherfield still remained in the hands of the Abbot of St. Denis, although King Alfred in his will (made between 872 and 885) bestowed the ham of *Hrytheranfelda*, with other places in Sussex, on his relative Osferth. At the period of the Norman Conquest, the monks appear to have lost their rights in Rotherfield, for it is not mentioned in Domesday Book as belonging to St. Denis,



hundred measures of salt from their salt-pans, and one hundred and fifty *solidos denariorum* from the *agricolæ* of Hastings and Pevensey, immediately caused the whole to be restored by the offender ; who was ordered, moreover, to carry the charter over to Paris, and place it on the sepulchre of the Holy Martyrs.<sup>2</sup> This charter was written, at the king's command, by Ediluinus, "*regiæ domus cartigraphus*." There are no other witnesses' names subjoined, nor does the king (as was usual) add his cross and subscription, but an impression from his seal was attached (although not mentioned in the charter) and still remains.

The two charters, now preserved in the Hôtel Soubise, are here reprinted *literatim*, but with the punctuation supplied ; and the principal variations in Doublet and Felibien will be found noted in the margin. The charter of Offa is written on a piece of parchment, folded lengthways into fourteen folds, and measures  $28\frac{3}{4}$  inches in length, by  $10\frac{3}{4}$  inches in width ; a form of unusual occurrence in Anglo-Saxon grants, which are generally of greater width than length. The writing is in a fair open, but rather uneven character, as seen in other contemporary charters. The Saxon letters *f*, *z*, *p*, *r* and *p*, are used in it, and the orthography is occasionally irregular, such as the use of *u* for *o*, and *b* for *p*.

CHARTER OF OFFA, A.D. 790.

[*Archives de France*, K. 7, *olim* K. 23.]

EUIDENTIA RERUM ET EXPERIENTIA declarant cassabundam mortalium uitam, et innumeris cotidie calamitatibus constringi, ita dum taxat ut ante a quibus teneri ac possideri putatur, repente et mumentaneo interuallo lugubriter euanescat. Ideo singulis quibusque sollicitè studendum est, ut dum indulta temporum spatia di nutu concessa manent, ne sine fructu spiritualium<sup>3</sup> bonorum<sup>4</sup> easdem indutias transeant. Quam obrem ego in di nomine OFFA rex merciorū, suggerente Maginario abbate per missum suū Nadelharium, de terra illa quæ — in loco illo, in portu uidelicet qui numcupatur Lundenuuic, ubi duo frs Agonauuala seu Sigrinus omem<sup>5</sup> suam possessionem spontanea uoluntate ante duos

but to the King, in demesne, as of the fee of the Bishop of Bayeux ; and William I. by his charter confirmed the grant made by Gilbert de Tonebridge to the church of Rochester of the church of Rotherfield. See *Monasticon*, vol. i. p. 164.

<sup>2</sup> Printed in Doublet, p. 817, and in

Felibien, *Pièces Just.*, No. 105, p. lxxix., and from the latter reprinted in Bouquet, *Recueil des Historiens de France*, tom. ix. p. 397, in 1757.

<sup>3</sup> *spiritualium* D. and F.

<sup>4</sup> After *bonorum*, D. inserts *ac virtutum*.

<sup>5</sup> Mistake for *omnem*.

annos scō Diunisio, martyri precioso, qui ÷ in Francia, sociisque eius dederunt, ego quoque censum omnem quod in parte mea iure accipere debui, et ad usus proprios adhuc retinebam, siue in auro, siue in argento, siue in redditibus aliis, totum ob amorem dī omnipotentis et reuerentiam preciosorum martyrum Diunisii, Rustici, et Eleutherii, iam dicto abbati Maginario ac scāe congregationi monachorum, uel eorum successoribus, in eodem munasterio preclaro, quod ÷ constructum in Gallias, in honore ipsorum martyrum libenti ac deuoto animo, una cū uoluntate meāe congugis (*sic*) filiique mei,<sup>6</sup> et optimatum meorum consensu, ab hac die concedo, cessumque imperpetuum esse uolo, ita ut ab hac die nec ego, nec posteriores (*sic*) mei, neque aliquis ex potestatibus huius sæculi reditum aliquem exinde quaua ratione reposcant, neque recipiant, sed semper in tempore meo uel meorum successorum, in potestate iā dicti abbatis et monachorum, fauente xpo, amplius et perfectius permaneat. Preterea donatum qđ amicus nr̄ et fidelis Berhtualð<sup>7</sup> dux, et frater eius Eadbalð<sup>8</sup>, de receptaculo suo Ridrefelda, quod ÷ in pago qui uocatur Successa, super fluuium Saforda, et de portu<sup>9</sup> super mare Hasting<sup>as</sup> et Peuenisel, quo modo ante dies istos, legaliter subscriptis testibus, ad eosdem scōs martires, qui sua deprecatione ab infirmitate nimia, qua tenebatur iam dictus dux, cum recuscitauerant, fecit, petentibus eisdem atque prefato abbate, nos et consessus optimatum meorum uno eodemque consensu laudamus et confirmamus. Si quis autem hanc nr̄am nroque constitutionem desiderio roboratam, quam ad scōs martyres pro amore dī et salute nr̄a fecimus, detrahendo uel uiolando infregerit, illa maledictio ueniat super eū, Ite maledicti in ignem aeternū. Qui aut seruauerit et adiuerit, cum scīs dī uiuat imperpetuum. Ut aut hæc pleniorē obtineant uigorem, manu propria subter firmauimus, atque nr̄i anuli impressione signari fecim<sup>9</sup>.

ANNO DOMINICÆ INCARNATIONIS DCC. xc.<sup>1</sup> Indict xiii. Anno namq; regni mei xxxiii.<sup>2</sup> cum his testibus, secundo die pascae, pridiae idus Aprilis, in Tomepordig,<sup>3</sup> hanc concessionem cum signo crucis xpi confirmaui.

- + Ego Offa rex Anglorum hanc donationem meam<sup>4</sup> manu mea confirmaui et subscripsi.
- + Hygberht archiep̄s subscrips.
- + Unuona ep̄iscop̄ subscrip̄.
- + Cyniðryð regina subscripsi.
- + Ecgferð filius regis subscrip̄.
- + Brorda dux subscripsi.
- + Bertuald dux subscripsi.<sup>5</sup>
- + Eodbalð dux subscripsi.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *filiiisque meis*, D. and F.

<sup>7</sup> *Berhtualdus*, D. and F.

<sup>8</sup> *Eadbalðus*, D. and F.

<sup>9</sup> *portubus*, D.

<sup>1</sup> *septingentesimo nonagesimo septimo*, D.

<sup>2</sup> *xxiii.* (falsely), F.

<sup>3</sup> *tome pordig*, D. and F.

<sup>4</sup> After *meam*, D. adds *et principum meorum*.

<sup>5</sup> Both these names are omitted in D.



+ Eduinus comis<sup>6</sup> subscripsi.

+ Ego Nadelharius monachus cum fr̃e meo Uitale et Eodbald duce de manu regis litteras has accipiens, et mecum deportans in Franciā, super sepulcrum sc̃i m̃r Diunsi couseuandas imperpetuum, iubente eo posui, ubi pro rege memoria inter reliquos benefactores agatur imperpetuum. Am.

L. S.

On the dors of the charter is written in a contemporary hand, in large letters—

PR<sup>8</sup> OFFANTIS<sup>9</sup> GLORIUSI REGIS ANGLORUM.

The date of this charter is stated in such precise terms as to afford of itself a good test of the genuineness of the document. The thirty-third regnal year of Offa and the thirteenth indiction both come within the year 790, whilst the second day of Easter, in the same year, actually fell on the twelfth of April, as noted in the charter. Among the witnesses who subscribe their names are, Hygberht, *Archbishop* (of Lichfield), and Unuuona, *Bishop* (of Leicester), who sign immediately after the king, and before the queen and their son Ecgferth, although the latter had been previously crowned by his father. With regard to these prelates, as well as some others of this period, the greatest confusion and obscurity exist, on which I feel it necessary to make some remarks, at the risk of being tedious. Wharton in his *Anglia Sacra*, vol. i. p. 423, seems almost in despair at the difficulties occasioned by the conflicting historical authorities and discrepancy of dates, and says, “nusquam crassiores tenebræ, nusquam plures nodi, quàm in successione episcoporum Mer-

<sup>6</sup> So in an indorsement of a charter of Offa in the *Cod. Dipl.* (No. 116), we read “Pilheardus misellus comis.”

<sup>7</sup> After this D. inserts ✠ *Ego Edeluinus Episcopus omni voto scripsi et confirmavi hanc cartam.* It seems quite unaccountable how these words should have found their way into Doublet's text, unless he took them from the copy in the ancient Cartulary of St. Denis, but even then, they are an unauthorised interpolation. No Bishop of the name of *Ethelwine*, living at this period, occurs in Le Neve's *Fasti*,

(edit. Hardy), but I find among the witnesses who subscribe to the first session of the Council of Cealchyth (in 787 or 788) the following one, “Ego *Ethelwinus Episcopus* per legatos suscripsi.” Who was he? Spelman, *Concilia*, i. 304, seems to conjecture he was “à Scotorum partibus.”

<sup>8</sup> *Præceptum.*

<sup>9</sup> This form is singular, but *Offani* is of frequent occurrence in the charters and *Vita Offe*.

ciensium." He comes, however, to the conclusion that, at the Synod of Cealchyth, held in 785,<sup>1</sup> Hygberht was nominated Bishop of Lichfield, and at the same time the see was constituted an Archbishopric by Offa, to the prejudice of Canterbury; but that Hygberht did not venture to assume the title of Archbishop (not having received his pall from Rome), since he signed the Acts of the Council as Bishop of Lichfield, and died the year after, 786, when he was succeeded by Adulf, who enjoyed the Archiepiscopal dignity until the year 803, at which time (at the Council of Clovesho) Lichfield was reduced again to the rank of a Bishopric. This statement is followed by Hardy, in his recent edition of Le Neve's *Fasti* (vol. i. p. 540), and were it true, the genuineness of Offa's charter might reasonably be questioned. But if we test Wharton's views by the evidence of many Anglo-Saxon charters,<sup>2</sup> on which no suspicion of forgery rests, they will be found to be completely erroneous. It would appear that Hygberht was first elected Bishop in 779 (*Cod. Dipl.* No. 137), and, admitting even his signature as *Bishop* at the Council of Cealchyth, in 788-9 (the real date of the second session of this Council), yet we find him signing as *Archbishop* in the same years, immediately after Jamberht, Archbishop of Canterbury (*Cod. Dipl.* Nos. 152, 155, 157); and in another charter, dated 789, the thirty-first year of Offa's reign, it is distinctly stated with reference to this Council, "duobus *archiepiscopis*, Jamberhto scilicet et *Hygeberhto*, presidentibus," (*Cod. Dipl.* No. 156). Subsequent to this date we again find him signing as Archbishop, and even taking precedence of Æthelheard, Archbishop of Canterbury (successor of Jamberht), in the years 792, 793 (but these are doubtful), 794,

<sup>1</sup> This is the date given by the Saxon Chronicle [in the copy Tib. B. IV. it is 786] and Florence of Worcester, but Spelman (with Hoveden) assigns it to 787, and owns he would even prefer 788. Lappenberg however points out that the Synod [the second session] was held in 789, (*Cod. Dipl.* No. 156), but falls into the error, that Adulf was then nominated the first Archbishop of Lichfield, (vol. i. pp. 227-234). The Saxon Chronicle expressly states, that at this Synod of Cealchyth, "Jambryht arceebiscop forlæt sumnedæl his biscopdomes, and fram Offan cyninge *Hygebryht* wæs gecoren."

(*MS. Cott.*, Tib. B. IV.); and so also Florence of Worcester.

<sup>2</sup> Wharton puts these aside, with the remark—"verum impudentium monachorum commenta parum moramur;" but this is not the language of an impartial inquirer. The authority of contemporary charters, if genuine, must be superior to that of historians writing some centuries afterwards. It must be admitted, however, that Wharton had not the body of evidence we now possess by the publication of the valuable *Codex Diplomaticus Aevi Saxonici* by Mr. Kemble.

twice between 791 and 796, 798, and 799 (*Cod. Dipl.* Nos. 162, 164, 166, 167, 175, 1020). It will be seen that these dates corroborate the signature to Offa's charter in 790, and if their united evidence, or even part of it, be admitted, it is certain that Hygberht could not have died in 786, nor could Aldulf have then succeeded him.<sup>3</sup> Again, in respect to Unnuona, Bishop of Leicester, we find it stated in the *Fasti* (edit. Hardy, vol. ii. p. 4), that he succeeded Eadberht in 796, and died in 835, when he was succeeded by Wærenberht. These dates cannot be reconciled with his signing as Bishop in 790, and we must again recur to the charters, which prove their great inaccuracy. Already, in 788 and 789, we find Bishop Unnuona signing at the Council of Cealchyth, and often subsequently, together with Hygberht, as late as the year 799.<sup>4</sup> His successor, Wærenberht, first occurs at the Council of Clovesho, in 803, and continued to sign till the year 814,<sup>5</sup> when we lose sight of him. It is evident, therefore, that William of Malmesbury is in error, when he names Wærenberht as one of the bishops who were proposed to be subject to Aldulf, the new Archbishop of Lichfield, in the time of Pope Adrian (who died in 795), and of Offa (who died in 796); and we may hence reasonably infer, that he errs also in regard to Aldulf. The author of the *Vita Offæ* commits still greater blunders, for he not only copies the above account of Malmesbury, but adds to it, that, at the very time (*ipso tempore*) Aldulf obtained the pall from Pope Adrian, Wærenberht, the Bishop of Leicester, died, and Unnuona, "*regis cancellarius et consiliarius familiarissimus*," was substituted in his place (thus reversing the

<sup>3</sup> The acts of the Council of Verulam (Spelman, i. 309) in 793, rest on very dubious authority, but if admitted, the name of *Humbert*, Archbishop of Lichfield, must be an error for *Hygbert*. A charter also in the *Cod. Dipl.*, No. 163, dated 793, in which *Aldulf* signs as Bishop of Lichfield, is not genuine. There is a later charter, dated 801, the fifth year of Coeuwulf, in which *Hugbert* appears as signing himself *Bishop* (evidently an error of the transcriber for *Archbishop*) before Æthelwald, Archbishop of Canterbury. This charter is not marked as doubtful, but I think it is likely to be so. (*Cod. Dipl.*, No. 1023). I am not ignorant of the assertions relative to the consecration of Aldulf in 786, but I do not believe them to rest on sufficient proof, when critically examined. The accounts given

of Aldulf by Malmesbury, *De Gestis Regum*, vol. i. p. 119 (ed. Hardy), and by the author of the *Vita Offæ*, are filled with so many errors, that it is impossible to rely on them; and *Hygbert* is ignored by both! The first certain mention of Aldulf in the charters seems to be in the year 803.

<sup>4</sup> See *Cod. Dipl.* Nos. 116, 153, 155—157, 159, 175, 1020. The charters dated in 806 and 810, (Nos. 192, 1026), in which Unnuona's name appears, are not genuine.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Nos. 183, 186, 190, 203, 206, 1024. The charter, No. 1018, dated in 798, in which he appears, is doubtful, and the Acts of the pretended Council of Bacanceld, in 798, (Spelman, *Concilia*, i. 317), are, by the editor's own admission, the acts of the Clovesho Council, in 803.

actual order of succession) ; and further, that soon after (*cito post*), the Archbishop Aldulf himself having died, Humbert, called also Bertun, was appointed his successor !!<sup>6</sup> The real order of succession to both sees is proved unquestionably by the *contemporary* lists given in MS. Cott. *Vespasian*, B. VI., fol. 101, in which we have, (1) *Eadberht*, (2) *Unuona*, and (3) *Uuærenberht*, as Bishops of Leicester ; and (1) *Berthun*, (2) *Hygberht*, and (3) *Aldulf*, as (Arch)bishops of Lichfield. The successors in each series are added by a *later hand*. On the whole, therefore, I think we may confidently conclude that the signatures of the two prelates attached to the charter of Offa, do not at all affect the genuineness of the document.

The charter of Eadgar is also written on a long piece of parchment, measuring  $24\frac{1}{2}$  inches by  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches, and is folded lengthways into ten folds. It is remarkable for the Frankish form of writing the king's name, *Ædgarðus*, and for the constant use of the vowel *u* for *o*. The Anglo-Saxon letters *f*, *p*, and *r* (not *ʒ*) are used in it, and there is a peculiarity in *ʒ* for *d* at the end of some proper names.

#### CHARTER OF EADGAR, A.D. 960.

[*Archives de France*, K. 17.]

ÆDGDARDUS per dī gratiam rex Anglurum, præsentiſibus et futuris. Quia nos ad æterna gaudia bonurū operum exhibitio ſine dubio perducet, dignum eſt ut dum adhuc quandoq; morituri uiuim<sup>2</sup>, unde dō placere valeam iſtant operemur.<sup>7</sup> Unde ego rex dī diſpenſatione, ſed meo peccator opere, cum eſſem florens in palatio meo, et glurioſus in regno, et de huius mundi glā quia cito euanescit ſepe mecū ſuſpirando cogitarem, anno ſecundo regni mei, indiſtione iii. ſeptimo kī Jān, uenit ad nos in Eburaca ciuitate uir ſtrenuus Uitalis nomine, et prepoſitus munasterii preciuſorum martirum Diuniſii, Ruſtici, et Eleutherii, quorū ſacra corpora lunorifice locata ſunt in Francia, in æcclā Daguberti regis, citra Pariſii urbem, ubi et ipſe rex ulim ſepultus eſt, et lamentabiliter in conſpectu nrō, nrōrum<sup>8</sup> principum, conqueſtus eſt ſuper dom<sup>9</sup> noſtre ppoſito Togred, quod in uilla eorum Ridrefelda, ccc. oues, et l. bues, et de ſalinis eorum c. meſuras ſat, et ab agricul qui ſunt in Haſtengas et Peueniſel, c. l. ſolidus denr<sup>9</sup> quaſi ex pre-

<sup>6</sup> MS. Cott. Nero D. I. f. 18, written in the *autograph* of Matthew Paris. In reality, Aldulf did not die till after 814, and his ſucceſſor was *Herewine*.

<sup>7</sup> *operemus*, D. and F.

<sup>8</sup> Ought to be *nrōrumque*.

<sup>9</sup> *denariurum* D. and F.



Seal of Oñá, A.D. 790.



Seal of Eadgar, A.D. 960.

cepto nro abstulerit. Quam iniustitiam ego ipse perhurescens, ad integrum eis cuncta restituere feci, et hoc ex præsentium nrorum principum consensu constitui, ut nullus eis ulterius in regno nostro aliquid auferat, sed collata sibi omnia ea securitate et libertate deteneant, regant atq; dispuant, qua tenuisse conprobantur illi qui eis contulerunt. Qui autem contra hoc nostrum preceptum fecerit, et eis aliquid p putestate abstulerit, capitali sententia puniatur, et illius uniuersa pussessio regio tesaurum addatur. Huic aut nro pposito Togred, quia seruus di munachus pro eo deprecatur, in hoc parcim<sup>2</sup>, ut ablata cuncta prius iuxta nrām pceptiune scōis di restituat, et has nrī precepti litteras ad Gallias secum ferat, et super scōrum sepulcra martyrum pro emendatiune ponat. Ipsa autem scā congregatio uiuorum qui ibi die noctuque incessanter excobant, pro nobis deprecantur, ut a nobis famem, pestem, et gladium ihc xpc dñs auertat, et potenti dextera sua nos defendat.

Ædiluinus regiæ domus cartigraphus, iubente domino meo rege Ædgarð<sup>2</sup> scripsi, et in auditu psentiū legi et subscripsi.

Et ego Togred, ex impio domini mei regis Ædgarð, ad sepulcra scōrum mī<sup>3</sup> Diunisii, Rustici, et Eleutherii, hoc pceptū conseruandum detuli.

L. S.

On the dors is inscribed in large letters, in a contemporary hand,

PR<sup>4</sup> DE ULTRA MARE.  
PR<sup>4</sup> ÆDGARÐ REGIS.

The seals on the charters of Offa and Eadgar (as represented in the annexed engravings<sup>5</sup>) are attached *en placard*, but not exactly according to the mode practised under the Carlovingian race in France; for instead of the wax being laid on both *above* and *beneath* the parchment, in both the instances before us another small piece of parchment has been stitched on to the charter, on the spot where the seal was intended to be impressed, namely, at the right hand corner of the lowest fold of the document; and the wax having then been affixed, the impression of the seal was made, after which, the ends of the smaller piece of parchment were folded over it, so as to form a sort of *chemise*, or

<sup>2</sup> *domno Edgardo D., domino Ædgarðo*  
F., leaving out the words *meo rege*.

<sup>3</sup> *martyrum*, D. and F.

<sup>4</sup> *Præceptum*.

<sup>5</sup> Casts of these seals were taken by the late Mr. John Doubleday, but, by accident,

he transposed the names of the monarchs to whom they belonged; and this error is repeated in the series of casts of the seals of English sovereigns exhibited in the Crystal Palace at Sydenham.



covering. This unusual mode of attaching the seals seems to have been adopted for the express purpose of protecting them from injury during their transit from England to the monastery of St. Denis. The seal of Offa is of brownish wax, of nearly circular form, measuring  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch in height by  $1\frac{1}{8}$  inch in width, and represents a bust in profile, turned to the right, and wearing a crown or circlet, on which a floreated ornament is visible. The king is represented without a beard, but with long hair, hanging down by the side of the face, and gathered up behind. The expression of the features indicate thought and care, but might fairly bear out the description of Offa's anonymous biographer, "*elegans corpore, eloquens sermone, acie perspicax oculorum.*"<sup>6</sup> The legend round the head appears to have originally been OFFA REX (as is generally seen on his coins), but at present there are but faint traces of the name, and only the letters REX are tolerably distinct.<sup>7</sup> There can be little doubt that the impression was made from the king's signet ring, as is asserted in the words of the attesting clause, "*manu propria subter firmavimus, atque nostri annuli impressione signari fecimus;*" a form which was borrowed from the Franks, as is shown in the diplomas of Pepin and Charlemagne.<sup>8</sup> It is evident also, that this bust is really a portrait of the Mercian monarch, and not an antique gem, as is so frequently the case in the seals of the Frankish sovereigns. The execution is superior to what we find on the coins of Offa, although it has been truly remarked of them, that they are of better taste and workmanship than any of the preceding or later Anglo-Saxon princes. Ruding conjectures that this marked improvement was due to the skill of Italian artists, whom Offa might have brought from Rome,<sup>9</sup> and if so, the execution of the seal may also be ascribed to the same influence. It is certain that the heads on the coins of his predecessors, and also of his immediate successors, are executed in the most barbarous style imaginable.

<sup>6</sup> *Vita Offæ Secundi*, ap. Wats, p. 10, ed. 1641.

<sup>7</sup> The seal was in just the same state at the beginning of the XVIIth century, as we learn from Sir Robert Cotton's note in MS., Harl. 66, f. 91.

<sup>8</sup> See Filibien, particularly the charters dated 775, 782, and 790.

<sup>9</sup> *Annals of the Coinage*, vol. i. p. 118, ed. 1840. Ruding speaks enthusiastically, and says, "These coins have the head of Offa in a style of drawing which is without parallel in the money of this island, from the time of Cunobelin to the reign of Henry VII." On the coins his head appears often without any ornament, but

The seal of Eadgar is also of brown wax, measuring nearly  $1\frac{3}{8}$  inch in height by  $1\frac{3}{16}$  inch in width, but is somewhat injured at the edge. The centre is evidently an impression from an antique oval Roman gem, representing a bust in profile, turned to the right, very similar to those used by Louis le Debonaire and Charles le Simple. This gem was, no doubt, set within a metal rim (as was also usual in France), on which was inscribed a legend; but the impression is unfortunately not well enough preserved to show more at present than indistinct traces of letters.<sup>1</sup>

Before I conclude these remarks, it may not be irrelevant to sum up the amount of our present information as to the use of seals among the Anglo-Saxons previous to the reign of Edward the Confessor. The instances known are these:—

1. The seal of Berhtwald, Duke of the South Saxons, A.D. 788, *en placard*.

2. The seal of Offa, King of Mercia, A.D. 790, *en placard*.

3. The original leaden bulla of Coenwulf, King of Mercia, *circa* A.D. 800—810. This interesting relic, the authenticity of which I do not doubt, was purchased for the British Museum in 1847, at the sale of Walter Wilson, Lot 445. It is said to have been brought from Italy, and it is possible that Coenwulf may have caused it to be suspended to some grant made to a foreign religious house. On the obverse is the legend ✠ EOENVVLF REGIS, and on the reverse, ✠ MEREIORVM. In the centre is a small cross moline, joined at the ends, as appears also on his coins. This bulla was engraved in the *Archæologia*, vol. xxxii. p. 449, but in the engraving the holes are not shown through which the cords passed to attach it to the charter, and the centre ornament is falsely represented as a quatrefoil.

4. The seal of Æthelwulf, King of Wessex, A.D. 837, *en placard*.

5. The original brass matrix of the seal of Æthilwald,

also with a diadem or double fillet of pearls, and pendants behind. In a few instances he is represented with his hair arranged in bands, in a fanciful manner.

<sup>1</sup> In 1759, the Benedictines thus described it,—“Il est en placard, et non suspendu. Il représente un buste de profil. Ayant été replié, il a marque sa forme sur le parchemin. La charte au bas de laquelle il est appliqué, porte tous les caractères de verité et d'authenticité qu'on

*peut desirer.*” *Nouv. Tr.* tom. iv. p. 204. A recent authority, M. Natalis de Wailly, in the *Elements de Paleographie*, 1838, tom. ii. p. 109, speaks of the seal in the following terms,—“Le sceau d'Edgar est en partie mutilé, et ne laisse voir que des traces fort confuses de la légende; cependant on distingue le mot *Rex*, en avant de la partie inférieure du buste. Mais la base des lettres s'appuie, contre l'ordinaire, sur le circonférence.”

Bishop of Dunwich, *circa* A.D. 850, preserved in the British Museum. It bears the inscription ✠ SIF EDILVVÆLDI EPI, and was engraved in the *Archæologia*, vol. xx. p. 479, but is there said to be ornamented with *wolves'* instead of *bulls'* heads, the horns of which are distinctly visible.

6. The seal of Eadgar, sole monarch, A.D. 960, *en placard*.

7. The original matrix of the seal of the Monastery of Durham, preserved in the Chapter library, probably as early as A.D. 970, bearing a cross in the centre, with the legend around, ✠ SILILLVM LVDBERHTI PRÆSVLIS SEI. Engraved in Smith's edition of Bede, 1722, App. p. 721. See also Raine's *History of North Durham*, p. 53.

8. The seal of Wilton Abbey, used in the time of Eadgar, probably *circa* 974; an impression of which is appended to the Harleian Charter 45 A. 36, (written *temp.* Edw. III.). It represents the figure of a female in a monastic dress, with the legend, ✠ SILILL EADLYDE REIAL ADELPHIE.

9. The original brass matrix of the seal of Leofric, Earl of Mercia, *circa* A.D. 985, in the British Museum; bearing his effigy, and the inscription, ✠ SILILLVM ÆLFRIEI AV., with an arabesque ornament on the back. Engraved in the *Archæologia*, vol. xxiv. p. 359.

With this accumulated evidence before us, we may be well justified in concluding that the Anglo-Saxon monarchs and nobles were well acquainted with the use of seals from the middle (at least) of the VIIIth century; and although they appear to have considered it unnecessary to authenticate or issue ordinary instruments "under seal," yet that on particular occasions they conformed to the usage practised on the Continent. Hickes, in commenting on the well-known passage of Ingulph, argues chiefly against the use of *pendant* seals before the time of Edward the Confessor, and in this respect (excepting the *bullæ*) he is no doubt right; but at the same time he seems to admit that the Anglo-Saxons occasionally employed seals for documents of a less formal character, such as letters missive. His words are—"Quinimmo sigillorum cujusvis generis (*en placard* and *pendant*) RARIOR erat USUS apud Anglo-Saxones. Quorum quidem Reges quandoque legimus iis literas suas munivisse. Sic in superioribus ostendi Æthelredum Regem per Ælverum Abbatem *sigillum* suum, Saxonice *his in segl*, hoc est, literas suas quas Brevia vos vocatis, *sigillo vel signo suo signatas*,

ad sapientes curiæ comitatus misisse.”<sup>2</sup>—*Dissert. Epist.* p. 71. The passage in the document referred to, reads as follows:—“*þa sende se cyning be Ælvere abbude his insegel to þam gemote at Cwicles-hlæpe,*” and Hickes endeavours to show that by *insegel* we must understand, not a seal, but a *monogram*, which, he thinks, was usually *stamped* in ink (but sometimes written) on the instrument; and in support of this interpretation he refers to a charter of William I., printed in the *Gramm. Anglo-Saxon.*, p. 137, in which a cross is made below the writing, with some letters on each side, thus:  $\frac{p}{co} | \frac{ill}{qs}$ . It is really mortifying to find so learned a man as Hickes indulging in such unfounded and idle conjectures. There is not a shadow of evidence that the Anglo-Saxons ever made use of Monograms, nor does a single instance exist among the numerous charters that have been preserved, of such a practice. As to the charter of William, if it were even genuine, it proves nothing, but the charter itself is in the Cottonian collection, *Cart.* VIII. 15, and on examination it turns out to be a forgery! It is worthy notice, that in the *Life of Cnut*, by Snorro, the historian speaks of the king’s seal being lost, and uses the same word, *incigli*, as is quoted above in Anglo-Saxon. Hickes of course rejects this testimony, but without any reasonable ground. The discoveries of late years have done much to throw light on the habits and customs of our ancestors before the Norman invasion, and it is not improbable that some fortunate accident may yet bring to light the seal-rings of some of the Anglo-Saxon monarchs, and thus give us undeniable testimony on a subject which has so long been a *quæstio vexata*.

F. MADDEN.

<sup>2</sup> This document is printed by Hickes, *ibid.* p. 4, and in the *Cod. Dipl.*, No. 693, where it is assigned to the years

995-6. The original is in MS. Cott. Aug. II. 15.